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Congress of the United States
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April 7, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

I am extremely concerned about the drinking water and groundwater contamination in the Village of Hoosick Falls, New York and surrounding communities.

As you are aware, groundwater and drinking water, including public water systems and private wells, in and around the Village of Hoosick Falls tested positive for elevated levels of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Sampling at the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics facility showed PFOA levels as high as 18,000 parts per trillion (ppt). Samplings within the public water supply and private wells also had alarming levels of PFOA present.

PFOA has been used in the production of non-stick surfaces and has been linked to several forms of cancer. In January 2009, EPA set an advisory for short-term exposure to PFOA at no more than 400 ppt. Earlier this year, the agency revised that limit to 100 ppt for regular residential water use.

It is my understanding that EPA has not promulgated an enforceable drinking water standard for PFOA under the Safe Drinking Water Act; however, the agency has acknowledged PFOA's toxicity, mobility, and bioaccumulation potential.

As EPA works to address drinking water concerns around the country, including in Flint, Michigan and Hoosick Falls, it is imperative that Congress understands the agency's role in supporting state and local efforts to respond to serious contaminations.

I understand that EPA has been involved in providing assistance to Hoosick Falls and other impacted communities. Therefore, I am writing today to request a briefing for my staff on the EPA's role in responding to this and future serious contaminations. Specifically, my office would like to better understand the following issues:

- What are the current and anticipated roles and responsibilities for federal, state, and local authorities in responding to water contamination and cleanup in the area surrounding Hoosick Falls?
- When did EPA make changes to its PFOA guidance? What are the implications of these changes?
- What has been done by federal, state, and local authorities to assess the scope and levels of exposure to PFOA and other contaminants in Hoosick Falls and nearby communities' water systems and source water?
- What has EPA done to support state and local efforts to mitigate exposure risks?
- Please provide an update on EPA's review of the state of science on PFOA. What additional advisories and guidance may be issued, if deemed appropriate, in the future?
- With the presence of PFOA in drinking water becoming more common, has EPA considered taking any additional steps to regulate PFOA as a hazardous substance or promulgate an enforceable drinking water standard? Under what authorities could these actions be taken?
- How does New York State's declaration of a Superfund site impact EPA's ability to assist in a collaborative cleanup response?

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to discussing these issues in greater detail in the near future.

I stand ready to work with you to address the risks associated with PFOA and to protect public health, drinking water, and the environment in New York State and throughout the entire country. Please contact Brendan Larkin in my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 225-5076 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Tonko", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress